

[Deposition]

SAY MORE— AN INTRODUCTION

From a deposition given by J. D. Salinger as part of his 1986 suit against Random House to stop publication of J. D. Salinger: A Writing Life, by Ian Hamilton. Salinger succeeded in enjoining publication of the book on the grounds that it violated his copyright by quoting unpublished letters. Excerpts from the deposition appear in In Search of J. D. Salinger, a new version of Hamilton's book that includes an account of the controversy, published this month by Random House.

Mr. Salinger, when was the last time you wrote any work of fiction for publication?

I'm not sure exactly.

At any time during the past twenty years, have you written a work of fiction for publication?

That has been published, you mean?

That has been published.

No . . .

At any time during the past twenty years, have you written any fiction which has not been published?

Yes.

Could you describe for me what works of fiction you have written which have not been published?

It would be very difficult to do . . .

Have you written any full-length works of fiction during the past twenty years which have not been published?

Could you frame that a different way? What do you mean by a full-length work? You mean ready for publication?

As opposed to a short story or a fictional piece or a magazine submission.

It's very difficult to answer. I don't write that way. I just start writing fiction and see what happens to it.

Maybe an easier way to approach this is, would you tell me what your literary efforts have been in the field of fiction within the last twenty years?

Could I tell you or would I tell you? . . . Just a work of fiction. That's all. That's the only description I can really give it . . . It's almost impossible to define. I work with characters, and as they develop, I just go on from there.